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**Academic Paper**

**“Elite athletes and their entourage – how can athletes be supported before, during and after their sports careers?”\***

## 1. Introduction

The International Olympic Committee’s (IOC) recent initiatives to emphasise the importance of the athlete’s entourage have given attention to the social relations that help promote the careers of elite athletes. These social relations vary between cultures; indeed, comparative studies have shown huge differences of career development of athletes and sport systems in various countries (see Digel 2002; Houlihan & Green 2008; De Bosscher, Bingham, Shibli, van Bottenburg & De Knop 2008). It is not possible to cover all developments and trends of elite athletes’ careers and the role of the entourage on a world-wide level; therefore, the aim of this paper is to focus on some selected aspects and examples of the athlete’s entourage by summarising some important efforts and connecting them to selected initiatives. This paper begins by outlining some recent initiatives of the IOC and its partner organisations which focus on entourages and relating these actions to the career paths of athletes, with an extra focus on athletes with a disability. This paper then addresses some general and ethical challenges concerning the athlete’s entourage, and it will end with an outlook including suggestions and recommendations.

## 2. Activities of the IOC Entourage Commission

Based on the material developed by the sub-group “The Athlete’s Entourage” of the International Athletes’ Forum, important initiatives have brought attention to entourages. The IOC Entourage Commission first met in December 2010 and “deals with matters concerning the relationship between athletes, coaches, managers, sponsors and all other stakeholders who support athletes. Every effort will be made by the Entourage Commission to improve the quality of services by uniting stakeholders” ([www.olympic.org/entourage-commission](http://www.olympic.org/entourage-commission)).

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On 4 July 2011, the IOC Executive Board approved the “Guidelines for the Conduct of the Athletes’ Entourage” which included a more detailed definition, general principles, and information about integrity, confidentiality, transparency, responsibility/accountability, sanctions, and athletes’ responsibilities (IOC 2011). In October 2011, the 5th International Athletes’ Forum held in Colorado Springs called for tough action on doping and tighter control of athletes’ entourages. The following definition of “entourage” was given at the Forum:

“The Entourage comprises all the people associated with the athletes, including, without limitation, managers, agents, coaches, physical trainers, medical staff, scientists, sports organisations, sponsors, lawyers and any person promoting the athlete’s sporting career, including family members” (IOC Executive Board 2011).

The recommendations of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Athletes’ Forum 2011 included the following areas, each of which can be related to an athlete’s entourage in different ways: education, infractions, ombudsperson, game times, and certification (<http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Reports/EN/FINAL-Recommendations-of-the-5th-International-Athletes-Forum-eng.pdf>). With regard to recommendations in the area of education, the Forum referenced the role model programmes and educational material based on the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) Athlete Role Model (ARM) experience. The newly introduced YOG in 2010 (summer) and 2012 (winter) with its focus on sport competitions *and* a Culture and Education Programme (CEP) obviously has offered a new perspective on how to educate athletes of different ages (young and senior) and their entourage by using different materials and approaches. We will return to the role of the YOG in the careers of elite athletes in a later section of this paper.

### 3. The “Amsterdam Declaration” 2012

The 8<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Sport, Education and Culture of the IOC in cooperation with UNESCO held from 25 to 27 November 2012 in Amsterdam presented a list of recommendations in their “Amsterdam Declaration” related to the athlete’s entourage and

asked for their implementation. Among these recommendations were objectives related to the “important role of the entourage”:

“ a. The role of the entourage and educator (family of athletes, coaches, trainers, and the supporting staff, as defined by the International Olympic Committee) is critical to the dispensation of Olympic Values to young people participating in every sport. It is therefore necessary that those who constitute the Entourage should themselves understand, believe in and subscribe to the Olympic values.

b. The Conference therefore appeals to the IOC in particular to include those that constitute the Entourage in its Olympic values education programmes as a matter of course. It appeals to the IOC to ensure that those who are associated with sport understand the need to understand that sport goes beyond its social and entertainment value. It is an important tool for mentoring young people and for fostering the spirit of friendship” (IOC 2012).

This part of the “Amsterdam Declaration” places particular emphasis on sharing Olympic values and on fostering the spirit of friendship by all members of the athlete’s entourage. As a consequence, the IOC and the relevant members of the Olympic family can take different approaches to supporting the athlete and promoting Olympic values. With regard to coaches, medical and therapeutic staff, and scientists, these issues can be included in training programmes, whereas other avenues of communication have to be used when addressing family members of the athletes. As some countries have (elite) sport schools in place (see Radtke & Coalter 2007; Houlihan & Green 2008) this seems to offer great opportunities to develop, disseminate, and implement educational programmes on a continuous basis.

#### 4. Initiatives to prepare for the Olympic and Youth Olympic Games

Other important opportunities to address issues related to Olympic values arise during periods of preparation for the Olympic Games as well as the Youth Olympic Games. Excellent examples of such an approach are the “travel companions” published by the German

Olympic Academy and the German Olympic Sports Confederation, which are booklets given to all athletes and members of the Olympic team of Germany on the occasion of receiving the national uniforms for the Olympic Games. “Travel companions” relate to the IOC’s definition of entourage because they are assembled and distributed by sports organisations in order to promote athletes’ careers.

The most recent booklet distributed prior to the 2012 London Olympic Games was entitled *Von Olympia nach London. Ein Reisebegleiter* (“From Olympia to London: A Travel Companion” Deutsche Olympische Akademie 2012). It included informational articles on the Olympic Games, the Olympic Movement in Germany, the Paralympics, the Youth Olympic Games, London 2012, Olympic Education and the Games of London (1908 and 1948), as well as literature and internet sources, thereby giving athletes the opportunity and resources to conduct further research on the Games.

The booklet’s chapter on “Olympic Education: On the Responsibilities of Athletes” focused on rights and responsibilities based on the “Olympic Charter”, risks and dangers for athletes, the importance of “Olympic Education” as well as the role and activities of the German Olympic Academy. The German Olympic Academy is therefore framed as a central actor in promoting Olympic values and addressing issues related to the athlete’s entourage. Preparations are currently underway for such a travel companion to be given to all team members participating in the 2014 Sochi Olympic Winter Games.

## 5. Selected examples of different stages and transitions of an athlete’s career

Numerous publications have focused on the early stages of a sporting career, the challenges of being an elite athlete or even an Olympic champion, and the various difficulties of coping with the transition to a post-elite sport stage in life (see Wylleman, Lavalée & Alfermann 1999; Stambulova, Alfermann, Statler & Côté 2009). This chapter gives an overview of initiatives related to how the entourage promotes the career paths of athletes from initiation to retirement which the IOC and other sport organisations have implemented in order to ensure the healthy personal development of athletes.

Although we cannot overgeneralise because the development of elite athletes is specific to the cultures in which it takes place, it is interesting to note some consensus within sport systems of various countries that it takes eight to twelve years of training for a talented athlete to reach elite levels. This is called the “ten-year or 10,000 hour rule” (Balyi 2001). A literature review shows that different approaches and models exist with regard to early or late specialisation (see Balyi & Hamilton 2004) depending on the specifics of a sport. That means that some sports such as gymnastics, figure skating and rhythmic gymnastics require early specialisation in training, whereas athletics, rowing and team sports like basketball and football require a more generalised approach to training at an early stage. Different approaches to development and specialisation mean that entourages are not standardised; they play diverse roles at varying times in athletes’ lives. Any formal initiatives that focus on entourages should therefore be geared toward athletes’ specific needs related to their sport.

### 5.1 The Youth Olympic Games as an early stage in some elite athletes’ careers

One recent and successful initiative to help some burgeoning elite athletes and their entourage become accustomed to high-performance sport is the Youth Olympic Games, which includes a valuable Culture and Education Programme (CEP). The CEP is a remarkable learning and educational opportunity offered to all athletes and their entourage on the occasion of the Youth Olympic Games, both in the summer and winter Games. Young athletes and members of their entourage are given the opportunity to learn about different cultures, to participate in educational programmes on crucial issues (such as healthy lifestyle, the fight against doping, Olympic values, social responsibility, combining sport and education, to name a few) and to be involved both in non-formal and informal learning settings (Doll-Tepper 2011).

Already on the occasion of the XIII Olympic Congress in 2009 in Copenhagen, many members of the Olympic family addressed issues related to youth and sport, highlighting the importance of a supportive environment for young athletes by their parents, coaches and other relevant persons (see IOC 2009; IOC 2010). Vast differences can be found amongst young athletes from different regions of the world concerning their particular life experiences. The YOG and CEP can help bridge these differences; by combining participation

in sport competition and educational and cultural programmes, the YOG and CEP offer real-life experiences for all young athletes and their entourage who are involved. That is why we might consider the YOG and CEP important events in the earliest stages of some elite athletes' careers.

Many of the athletes and their entourages of the 2010 and 2012 YOG had not travelled much in their lives, which means they had not had the chance to live amongst different cultures in an Olympic Village or experience the advantage of speaking foreign languages. Not only athletes, but also some coaches, physiotherapists and, in a few cases, even of Chefs de Mission reported similar experiences. The YOG as a complex learning opportunity should be used to its fullest extent by initiating preparations for it in the home countries and engaging with the athletes and all members of their entourages. Furthermore, during the YOG, participation in the CEP should be encouraged, which should also give the coaches and the Chefs de Mission from different teams the chance to exchange experiences.

Another inspiring element of the CEP is the opportunity to meet past and current Olympians. This interaction also plays a role in emphasising the importance of the athletes' social relations, which made for a great learning experience for young athletes and their entourage.

Meeting Olympians, however, presented a very particular issue related to athletes and their entourage: differences in the educational requirements between countries. On the occasion of a "meet your role model" session at the 2012 Youth Olympic Winter Games in Innsbruck, Lindsey Vonn, the famous skier from the USA, was asked how she was able to combine training and competition with her school life. She reported about her experience with "home schooling", which meant that for several years she did not attend school but was educated at home. Vonn's answer caused reactions of surprise and astonishment because "home schooling" is not permitted in many countries around the world. Young athletes, from Germany and Austria for example, became very interested in such an educational approach which was totally unknown to them, and they started to discuss its advantages and disadvantages for an athlete's career. This is only one example of how the CEP raises young

athletes' awareness of the various roles that their entourage can play in their sporting careers.

## 5.2 Roles of the athlete's significant others

This section presents a few selected examples and initiatives which focus on different stages of a sporting career and the relation of the athlete with "significant others" such as family, coaches, and teachers. In most cases it is family members, such as mothers, fathers and siblings who are the significant others to young people at kindergarten and primary school age. The roles of an instructor or coach greatly differ depending on the specific sport; for example, there are many differences between coaches in team sports and individual sports. This current article does not discuss talent identification and development systems; however, the different approaches taken by sport federations and governments are closely connected to an athlete's overall development (see Fisher & Bailey 2008; Vaeyens, Lenoir, Williams & Philippaerts 2008; Vaeyens, Güllich, Warr & Philippaerts 2009).

One instance of the interrelation between entourages of elite athletes is a very special initiative from the German Olympic Sports Confederation launched in 2011: a contest that identifies athletes and their families who combine a sporting career with volunteer work, professional work, or both. In January 2012 at a New Year's reception, a family of elite athletes in wrestling was presented an award: the father, Mirko, was a silver medallist in wrestling (Greek Roman) at the Olympic Games in Beijing 2008, and the mother, Yvonne, was a bronze medallist at the 2011 European Championships in wrestling, after given birth to two children. They are an outstanding example of how the whole family (including extended members such as grandparents) and even employers belong to an elite athlete's entourage. This is also a good example of how elite athletes must often balance the aspects of their personal and professional lives, which is the topic of the next section.

## 5.3 Dual careers

Several publications and surveys focus on how it is possible to combine a sporting career and education (see Richartz & Brettschneider 1996), which refers to the term "dual career". Dual

career paths exist at various phases in an athlete's biography, particularly when combining training/competition in sport with education in school, then after leaving school and combining sport with professional training or study at college or university. Stambulova, Alfermann, Statler and Côté (2009) have provided an excellent overview of career development and transitions of athletes in their "ISSP Position Stand" in which they emphasise the importance of taking a holistic view of athletes who have "achieved to search for a balance between demands in sport and outside sport, to prioritise in their lifestyles, and to emphasise transferable competencies (...) that can work as resources in coping with transitions both in and outside sport. It is recommended that athletes' significant others support athletes' athletic and non-athletic interests and identities throughout the duration of their dual careers" (Stambulova/Alfermann/Statler & Côté 2009, 408). This approach, which is being practiced in many countries, focuses on the importance of combining a sporting career with education in terms of school, professional training and work. This is a key issue both for young athletes (such as the participants of the Youth Olympic Games) and also for athletes during the whole period of their sporting career.

In many countries, elite sport schools exist which aim to ensure the combination of education and elite sport. Radtke and Coalter (2007) presented a comparative study focusing on "sports schools" in ten countries (Australia, Belgium, Germany, Finland, France, Italy, Canada, The Netherlands, Sweden and Singapore), and the authors identified a number of differences and similarities. In all cases, attending a particular school which emphasises elite sport and provides access to a network of support, such as teachers and coaches, sometimes even specific consultants, presented a positive environment to young athletes. On the other hand, the extent of flexibility concerning the phases of learning and teaching (based on the curriculum) differed greatly. Support and assistance for athletes attending these "sport schools" was available, however; those who did not succeed in their sporting career or who dropped-out from sport had to face great challenges when leaving this special environment.

The career of an athlete has to be seen as a process that not only leads to high performance sport and includes the phase of peak performance and competitions at the highest level, but also – at the end of a sporting career – facilitates transition to a professional life inside or outside the world of sport. In other words, commitment to and involvement in high



performance sport should not lead for a person into a “cul-de-sac” (see Hülsen 2008), a dead-end for elite athletes past their sporting prime. Because dual career paths are found throughout athletes’ biographies, it is crucial during all of these phases to provide support for the athletes, especially from trained professionals such as so-called “career consultants” (see Hülsen 2012).

#### 5.4 Post-sport career developments

Based on the experiences and findings of research projects concerning the challenges athletes face when retiring from high performance sport (see Hackfort, Emrich & Papathanassiou 1997), many efforts are currently undertaken both on international and national levels to implement support systems for retiring athletes. Again, it is not possible to generalise the challenges athletes face in different sports in various national sports systems, both when competing in and retiring from sports, because countries are offering currently support services (e.g. via governmental or non-governmental entities) for athletes in this phase of transition based on their respective sport systems. However, we can identify some common aspects of retirement from sport, such as the age of the athlete and his/her sport, the financial costs of sport, and the individual financial situation of the athlete to name but a few factors (Hackfort, Emrich & Papathanassiou 1997).

In 2005, the IOC launched an “Athlete Career Programme” which was renewed in 2012. Currently this programme is offered by the IOC, the IPC and the National Paralympic Committees in cooperation with Adecco to Olympic and Paralympic athletes (<http://athlete.adecco.com/Pages/Home.aspx>) in order to help athletes in their transition from sport to the labour market. On international and national levels, cooperation models between the sport systems and the corporate sector are being developed to ensure athletes a successful transition.

A recent survey in Germany conducted by Breuer and Hallmann (2013) has identified several risks and challenges for athletes during and particularly after their sporting career. A specific focus of this study is placed on the perceptions of the athletes in terms of the pressures from members of their entourage as well as from representatives of the media. The athletes’

responses are contrasted to the general public's perceptions of elite athletes. Results of this survey show clear discrepancies between the perceptions of the athletes and the public as far as pressure, risks and fears regarding the future are concerned. As a consequence, strategies need to be developed to ensure that a support system is in place for athletes once they finish their sporting career and to "educate" the general public about the risks and fears of athletes so that they are portrayed in a more realistic way instead of describing them as "superheroes".

#### 6. Athletes' careers – from initiation to retirement: A perspective on athletes with a disability

In recent years, especially based on the very successful Paralympic Games in 1992 in Barcelona, interest in the biographies and career paths of athletes with a disability has been increasing. It is therefore not a surprise that already in the 1990s, academic papers were published on issues related to different transition stages of elite athletes with a disability. Wheeler, Malone, Van Vlack, Nelson and Steadward (1996) published a pilot study on the topic of retirement from disability sport in which they analysed the experiences of elite athletes with a disability during the period of retirement from high performance sport. A few years later Wheeler, Steadward, Legg, Hutzler, Campbell and Johnson (1999) published an international study on careers in disability sport. Despite some specific anxieties which were expressed by athletes with a disability, such as those in wheelchair sports being afraid of acquiring a "secondary" disability due to a chronic overuse injury, most of the findings indicate great similarities between athletes with and without a disability, with perhaps the role of family and "significant others" playing a greater role in the lives of athletes with a disability. Some examples of this are listed later in this section.

Generally speaking, athletes might be confronted with difficulties in coping with retirement when there was no preparation for retirement and retirement occurred involuntarily, such as when it is caused by an injury. Those athletes who had planned their retirement and who had other interests and opportunities outside their sporting career report a positive approach to retirement. Very little, if any, information, however, was given on the role of members of their entourages (Wheeler, Malone, Van Vlack, Nelson & Steadward 1996).

A practical approach to find out more about the role of the entourage of athletes with a disability could be to study the biographies of these athletes. Here are a few examples:

- Marianne Buggenhagen, a very famous German Paralympic athlete in a wheelchair, has described her life within and outside sport in her biography *Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuß auf Leben eingestellt* ("I am prepared for life from head to toe") (Buggenhagen 2001<sup>2</sup>) and she emphasised the crucial role of her husband as well as the coaches in her long career. Although she is currently still competing as a Paralympic athlete, she has also committed herself as a coach of young athletes, which she describes as an extremely satisfying task.

Amongst the many examples of a successful career shared by athletes with a disability is also

- Rainer Schmidt, an outstanding athlete in table tennis who was born with a shortened thigh and without arms. His biography is entitled *Lieber Arm ab als arm dran* ("It is better to be lacking an arm than to have a hard time") (Schmidt 2004<sup>2</sup>). His career path is also very special, since he chose a sport, table tennis, which challenged him to be exceptionally creative in developing an apparatus to attach the table tennis bat to his arm. In his long career, he received continuous support from his family as well as from his coaches. Parallel to his sporting career, he graduated from the University of Heidelberg, Germany, in theology and is currently active as a motivational speaker, a consultant, and many other professional roles.

These examples were chosen to illustrate different career paths of athletes with a disability, whose career paths and transitions show many similarities to athletes without a disability, although, as mentioned above, the role of family members as their "entourage" seems to have a greater impact on athletes with a disability.

The crucial importance that family, friends and coaches have for athletes with a disability can be illustrated by a very special example of Joachim Deckarm. Deckarm was one of the most successful German handball players when he crashed into another player of the opposing team during a game in Hungary and lost consciousness. He was diagnosed with

serious brain damage and awoke after 131 days in a coma to his “second life”. His life story, written by Heggen (2009), is entitled *Teamgeist – Die zwei Leben des Joachim Deckarm* (“Team spirit – The two lives of Joachim Deckarm”). It is an impressive document of how members of an athlete’s entourage can make unique contributions to the physical and psycho-social development of their athlete after an extremely serious injury. This particular example was chosen to show that members of an athlete’s entourage might stay connected over a long period of time, maybe even stay with an athlete for his or her whole life.

## 7. Some challenges for elite athletes and their entourage

Although entourages help promote elite athletes’ careers, the process of supporting elite athletes from the initiation of their careers to retirement is not without its challenges. This section will address some selected challenges that athletes and their entourages face during the stages of their careers.

One key aspect to consider is the fact that coaches and young athletes belong to different generations; a generation gap within the entourage can therefore occur, and this must be overcome. Amongst the many other challenges in the relation and interaction between coaches and athletes are motivational approaches (see Margeaux & Vallerand 2003). This refers not only to the specific situation of coaches and their closeness to male and female athletes, but also the necessity to keep the appropriate distance. This is a challenge because very often the coach has to fulfil different roles, such as that of a teacher, a mentor, a friend or even a father figure (if not an athlete’s actual father).

Another challenge related to motivational relationships between athletes and their entourage is the drop-out rate of young people in competitive sport. Several studies have tried to analyse the reasons for dropping out from sport and have identified many different motives such as time clashes with other interests and activities, overemphasis on winning by parents and coaches, and peer pressure, to name a few factors (see Butcher, Lindner & Johns 2002; Enoksen 2001). Based on such analyses initiatives against dropping out can be developed; in some countries, governments, sport organisations and foundations work

together in order to create a supporting network for athletes. Sometimes companies and the private sector are also involved, for example, by offering workplaces.

Once young athletes have entered the competitive arena – depending on the elite level of competition – “other significant persons” play an increasingly central role in their lives. This includes professionals such as psychological consultants, medical doctors, physiotherapists, and at a later stage maybe managers, sponsors or career consultants. In this context, athletes’ other significant persons highlight the importance of multidisciplinary support services to athletes so that they can receive support of the highest quality level at all stages of their sporting career. As highlighted in a previous section on developing athletes’ cultural awareness from a young age, particular focus should be given to the aspect of cross-cultural experiences and services because today’s athletes and coaches from around the world likely have diverse cultural backgrounds. Very often, elite athletes and coaches leave their home country and are challenged to adjust to a new culture, sometimes with other languages and different beliefs and value systems. This paper has suggested that initiatives such as the Culture and Education Programme of the Youth Olympic Games can help address this challenge.

#### 7.1 Challenges – underrepresentation of women coaches in the athlete’s entourage

Bahlke, Benning and Cachay (2003) reveal that female coaches who succeed up to the elite level, for example coaching athletes at Olympic level, are perceived not only as excellent coaches, both in terms of their coaching skills in sport and their psychological empowerment of the athletes, but also as mediators and important persons of the entourage. However, their study also shows an underrepresentation of women as coaches (Bahlke, Benning & Cachay 2003). Although leaders in sport organisations, male coaches as well as male and female athletes complain about the current situation, the efforts to increase the number of female coaches have not yet been very successful. The reasons for this discrepancy in the number of male and female coaches are manifold; women who were interviewed expressed concerns about combining their involvement in sport with their family life, their exceptional role as a female coach with a lack of acceptance and respect and, in general, a lack of female role models.

In order to encourage more women to enter a career as a coach, Bahlke, Benning and Cachay (2003), listed a number of recommendations including the development of an attractive professional environment, the reduction of difficulties in combining family life and coaching, the increase of acceptance of female coaches, and the implementation of programmes directed towards women to become coaches at all performance levels (see Bahlke, Benning & Cachay 2003, 307 ff.).

## 7.2 Ethical training for athletes, coaches and teachers concerning the fight against doping and sexual harassment and abuse in sport

Many papers related to the athlete's entourage focus on the role and impact of coaches and medical doctors during the sporting career of an athlete. While there are accounts of a very positive influence of these individuals, there have also been very negative experiences being reported, in particular with regard to involvement in doping practices and, in the case of coaches, with regard to sexual harassment and abuse (see Fasting, Brackenridge & Sundgot-Bergen 2000; Volkwein-Caplan & Sankaran 2002; Fasting 2005). The following sections will address these challenges found in athletes' entourages; it will also highlight some initiatives that have been launched to confront these issues.

### 7.2.1 Doping

The "Guidelines for the Conduct of the Athletes' Entourage" (IOC 2011) emphasise, with regard to the integrity sport, that any form of doping has to be rejected and that athletes and their entourage have to comply with the WADA code and support its programmes. WADA has developed excellent programmes for athletes and coaches which are offered in different languages and have been presented on many occasions, for example as part of the CEP of the Youth Olympic Games 2010 in Singapore and 2012 in Innsbruck (<http://www.wada-ama.org/en/Education-Awareness>, <http://www.wada-ama.org/en/Education-Awareness/Tools/Coach/CoachTrue--Elite/>).

A very recent example of an ethical training programme for athletes and their entourage (i.e. coaches and teachers) on doping issues was published by Brand, Berding, Schlegel and Elbe

(2012) entitled *Doping – Soll ich oder soll ich nicht?* (“Doping – Should I or should I not?”). This publication draws the attention of athletes, coaches and teachers to various difficult situations in which decisions have to be taken, and it aims to prepare athletes and their entourage for similar “serious” situations in their lives. This teaching manual includes different modules, and it uses the method of “dilemma-discussion”. This means that realistic situations are presented in which decisions cannot easily be made; for example, it offers the case of an athlete’s much-longed for participation in a marathon against the doctor’s orders due to health risks. The manual asks athletes and their entourage to consider what is more important and what impression does their decision make. Many examples are presented which should help the athletes and their entourage have a better understanding of their own decision-making processes.

#### 7.2.2 Sexual Harassment

With regard to protecting athletes’ health and rights, measures have been taken during recent years to address all issues related to sexual harassment and abuse. In 2007, the IOC adopted a consensus statement on “Sexual Harassment & Abuse in Sport” (IOC 2007) which is based on current scientific knowledge and includes the following chapters: defining the problem, scientific evidence, prevalence, risks and consequences, relationships in sport, and prevention strategies. This statement also includes recommendations and a resource list (see IOC 2007).

In this context, the IOC, National Olympic Committees and other organisations in sport, physical education and sport science have initiated workshops, special sessions for athletes and their entourage as well as publications and teaching materials. Women Sport International (WSI) has implemented a “The Sexual Harassment Task Force” which has published a “Brochure on Sexual Harassment and Abuse in sport” ([http://www.sportsbiz.bz/womensportinternational/taskforces/harassment\\_brochure.htm](http://www.sportsbiz.bz/womensportinternational/taskforces/harassment_brochure.htm)). The IOC, in particular, had addressed this issue on various occasions, such as during the Culture and Education Programme (CEP) of the Youth Olympic Games 2010 in Singapore and 2012 in Innsbruck. Interactive video-sessions and workshops at the CEP were offered to young athletes and members of their entourage.

Another example of such teaching material for sport organisations and sport clubs is the brochure *Gegen sexualisierte Gewalt im Sport* ("Against sexual violence in sport" Deutsche Sportjugend 2011) which includes a manual for sport clubs aimed at protecting children and youth, and an orientation paper regarding legal issues. In addition, the training programmes of all instructors and coaches within the German Olympic Sports Confederation have recently been modified; they now require that each participant completes mandatory modules on sexual harassment and abuse.

In summary, many efforts in the world of sport have been undertaken to address the issues of doping and sexual harassment and abuse. However, new cases concerning these harmful issues are being detected almost every day which require even more activities and efforts towards safeguarding the health of the athletes and the integrity of sport.

## 8 Outlook

Without any doubt, the role and impact of an athlete's entourage is being given more attention than ever before. Initiatives by the IOC have highlighted their importance, which all members of the Olympic family should consider, and which have to be put into action, particularly on national and local levels. This paper has addressed a number of selected issues and aspects, and it has stressed various facets of interaction and influence by members of elite athletes' entourages. Despite negative examples of influence, the vast majority of athletes enjoy positive relationships, to different extents, with members of their family, coaches, teachers, managers, and medical and therapeutic staff, which of course vary during and after athletes' sporting careers.

The introduction of the Youth Olympic Games with a combination of sporting competition and a Culture and Education Programme has opened up a new dimension of opportunities based on increased awareness of risks and chances during the career of an elite athlete. It is therefore recommended to increase scientific work on the influence of different significant others on the athlete at different stages of his or her sporting career. Particular attention should be given to the issue of "drop-outs" and issues related to the different cultural and



language backgrounds, as well as issues specific to the underrepresentation of women coaches, doping, and sexual harassment. While the focus of most publications is given to the initiation and duration of an athlete's sporting career, more attention should be given to the preparation for the post-elite sport stage as a highly important experience of personal and professional transition.

Governmental agencies as well as sport organisations need to encourage a balance between sport and education for their athletes. This is also reflected in the follow-up of the recommendations of the XIII Olympic Congress in Copenhagen in 2009 in the section on "Olympism and Youth":

"The Olympic Movement must strive to extend its remit and to increase its influence with young people across the sport, using sport as a catalyst for their education and development. To ensure increased participation in physical activity and sport and to promote healthy life styles, governments should be encouraged to intensify their efforts to work with sports organisations and young people so that sports activities have a prominent place in schools, at all ages and at all levels" (IOC 2009, 45).

The message is very clear: sport needs to be connected to education and education needs to be connected to sport.

A safe and supportive environment which includes an athlete's entourage is a key component for a healthy and successful sporting career. Athletes of different ages can be empowered, encouraged and motivated by different significant others. On the other hand, they can also be discouraged, demotivated, sometimes even devastated. It is therefore necessary to inform all members of an athlete's entourage about their roles and responsibilities to ensure that they respect the rules of fair play and, whenever possible, provide training for the competitive field, especially with regard to psycho-social competencies.

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## Summary

Elite athletes and their entourage – how can athletes be supported before, during and after their sports careers?

Recent initiatives on international and national levels within the Olympic Movement have emphasised the importance of the athlete's entourage. Specific attention has been given to the social relations between athletes and members of their entourage at the different stages of their sports career. This paper presents some selected aspects and examples of the athlete's entourage, highlighting in particular the initiatives of the International Olympic Committee, especially those carried out by the "IOC Entourage Commission". In addition, recommendations of the 8<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Sport, Education and Culture by the IOC in cooperation with UNESCO are presented in order to stress the relevance of the topic on a global level. There is a need for a greater awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the athlete's entourage, and this is reflected in specific initiatives in preparation for Olympic and Youth Olympic Games.

Selected examples of the different stages of an athlete's career are given. This begins at the early phases of a career, for example, in the context of the Youth Olympic Games as well as of elite sport schools, to the period of active participation in high performance training and competition with the challenge of combining a sporting career with education, the so-called "dual career". During this phase, the crucial role of trained professionals who can serve as "career consultants" is highlighted. A special chapter on post-sport career developments presents current findings and initiatives. Examples of careers of athletes with a disability are given, also in the context of the role of the "significant others" of their entourage (e.g. family members, coaches and teachers). Particular challenges for athletes and their entourage are presented and discussed with regard to the fight against doping and sexual harassment and abuse in sport.

The final chapter summarises current developments with regard to athletes and their entourage. It calls for a safe and supportive environment for the athletes before, during and after their sports career which is secured by all relevant individuals of their entourage.

Key words: athlete's entourage, sports career, dual career, sport schools, athlete's biographies, career paths, Olympic Games, Youth Olympic Games, drop-outs, doping, sexual harassment and abuse in sport.